

Hempstead High School Follow-up Case Study

[Full scale site visits were conducted at Hempstead High School during the spring of 2004 and 2005. The 2006 follow-up was a phone interview conducted with the principal of Hempstead High School, David Olson.]

In the spring of 2004, we first visited Hempstead High School to study their implementation of the Iowa Professional Development Model (IPDM). Following that first visit, we noted that the school was strong on the operating principles (focus on instruction, shared decision making, leadership) and had made progress in providing learning opportunities for teachers, establishing collaborative teams and the study of implementation. We also observed that the school had additional work to do in the areas of providing in-depth training for teachers to learn their PD content, planning and monitoring an implementation, collecting formative data, and incorporating joint planning of lessons into team meetings.

Content and Training

In the spring of 2005, we learned that the school's leadership team was now composed of representatives to the district Learning Strategies Team and Data Team. The PD target and content were unchanged, e.g., increased reading comprehension scores through the implementation of content area reading strategies. The content learned during three two-hour sessions during the first year of IPDM implementation was:

Beers and Howell, Reading Strategies in the Content Areas, ASCD 2003

1. Encountering new words
2. Connect new knowledge to existing knowledge
3. Think ahead
4. Continually evaluate understanding
5. Create images of what is read
6. Periodically summarize
7. Use textual clues, visuals, text organization
8. Have a plan to approach reading task

Although the content was the same, departments were engaged in extensive study of their ITED data and identifying a more narrow range of content area strategies for implementation. Teachers had two additional training sessions with an external consultant during the 2004-05 academic year but most of the training was being provided by teachers to each other.

During the summer of 2005, six teachers were selected from the faculty to serve as literacy coaches for the 2005-06 academic year. They attended a day-long session with DE trainers on designing collaborative teams for implementation of content and a week in Chicago with Kathy Toll on instructional coaching. During the week in Chicago, one and a half days were devoted to role playing the coaching of individuals and groups. This year, the literacy coaches meet together daily with the principal to problem solve needs identified at the school and plan their approaches to that work. They have an additional hour to work one-on-one with teachers and/or departments.

Much of the PD focus this year has been on the study of data and the design of Individual Career Development Plans (ICDPs). Literacy coaches are primarily responsible for planning PD this year, with input from departments and the ICDPs.

Also in the summer of 2005, a team of four teachers attended the DE summer academy on QAR and are piloting that program in the school this year. These teachers meet weekly for half an hour to discuss and plan their QAR implementation and periodically are released to work with a QAR team from another city high school.

Finally, Hempstead has joined the Iowa High School Project on successful practices and has made a three-year commitment to work with Willard Daggett on that initiative. It is unclear at this time whether this will entail adding new content to the PD agenda at the school or the focusing of current content on the principles espoused by the Iowa High School Project (e.g., greater individualization of instruction, etc.).

Hempstead continues to have eight early release days during the year, with two hours each of those days reserved for PD.

Collaboration

During our 2005 visit, collaborative teams were working to align their selection of instructional strategies with ITED results. Teachers were able to pull ITED results for specific classes to determine student learning needs. In our classroom observations, we encountered a fair amount of vocabulary work in various content areas.

During the 2005-06 school year, Fall collaboration efforts were heavily focused on the use of ITED data in the design of ICDPs. Literacy coaches worked with teachers to analyze data for one of their classes and set data-based goals. This collaborative work is now driving the implementation effort. For example, if a social studies teacher discovered, through his analysis of ITED data for one class, that students were experiencing difficulty in interpreting graphs and political cartoons, the use of content area instructional strategies would be focused on that specific instructional application.

Collaborative teams at present are configured by subject area and even sub-sets of departments. Rather than math meeting as a department, all algebra teachers meet together to share their current use of strategies and plan next steps. Only 30 minutes is allocated for these weekly meetings and in the current schedule (7 period day), no additional time is available for collaborative team meetings.

Implementation

The use of ICDPs to drive PD has greatly increased the accountability of all teachers for the implementation of PD content. Uses of content area reading strategies are actually recorded in teacher portfolios and are updated frequently. The school is no longer using the Keystone implementation data format that was used last year because teachers felt the data were not actually answering the questions they had about implementation.

Formative Data

During the 2005 site visit, the Hempstead faculty and leadership were still considering options for the collection of formative data on reading comprehension. Since they administer ITED in the Fall and MAP in the spring, they currently have only two data points during the year and these are from two different tests. The present study of data yielded by MAP should help this decision making process.

Follow-up of Case Study

For the 2006 school year, the formative data collection plan is for all teachers to collect information on teacher-made tests specifically relevant to the student learning goals they have set in their ICDPs.

Results

ITED reading comprehension data for the past three years are summarized in the table below.
Percent of Students Proficient at Hempstead High School
On the ITED Reading Comprehension Test

	2003-04			2004-05			2005-06		
	9th	10th	11th	9th	10th	11th	9th	10th	11th
All Students	78.9	78.1	83.0	77.7	78.4	75.8	76.5	77.8	80.0
Low SES	63.2	65.5	83.7	69.7	58.3	63.3	52.2	66.7	69.0
IEP Students	26.2	35.1	38.7	28.3	30.8	24.5	27.1	25.6	32.4

Comments

The greatest change in Hempstead's implementation of the IPDM this year has been the linking of literacy coaches with individual teachers in the design of ICDPs and the use of those plans to guide training and implementation of PD content. The literacy coaches help teachers update their plans continuously. An example of this process can be seen in an industrial technology course. Test data and student observation revealed a student weakness in the use of measuring tools such as micrometers. The literacy coach worked with the IT teacher to target instruction of measurement and a recurring cycle of teaching and testing was conducted throughout the first semester. At the end of the semester, students who had done well on interim tests had lost ground on the final exam. The cycle has now been reinstituted, with the coach modeling lessons in the classroom to address this specific skill.

Two issues on the horizon have implications for Hempstead's continuing implementation of the IPDM. The first is a major construction project – the school will be gutted and rebuilt in sections next year, which will entail the moving of teachers from room to room. The second is a major proposed schedule change that would combine an eight-period day with a 4x4 block and would thus add additional change into an unsettled physical plant.

We discussed the possibility of providing literacy coaches with greater in-depth training in several instructional strategies and allowing them to continue their training with small groups in the coming year.